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# The Saturday Review of Literature

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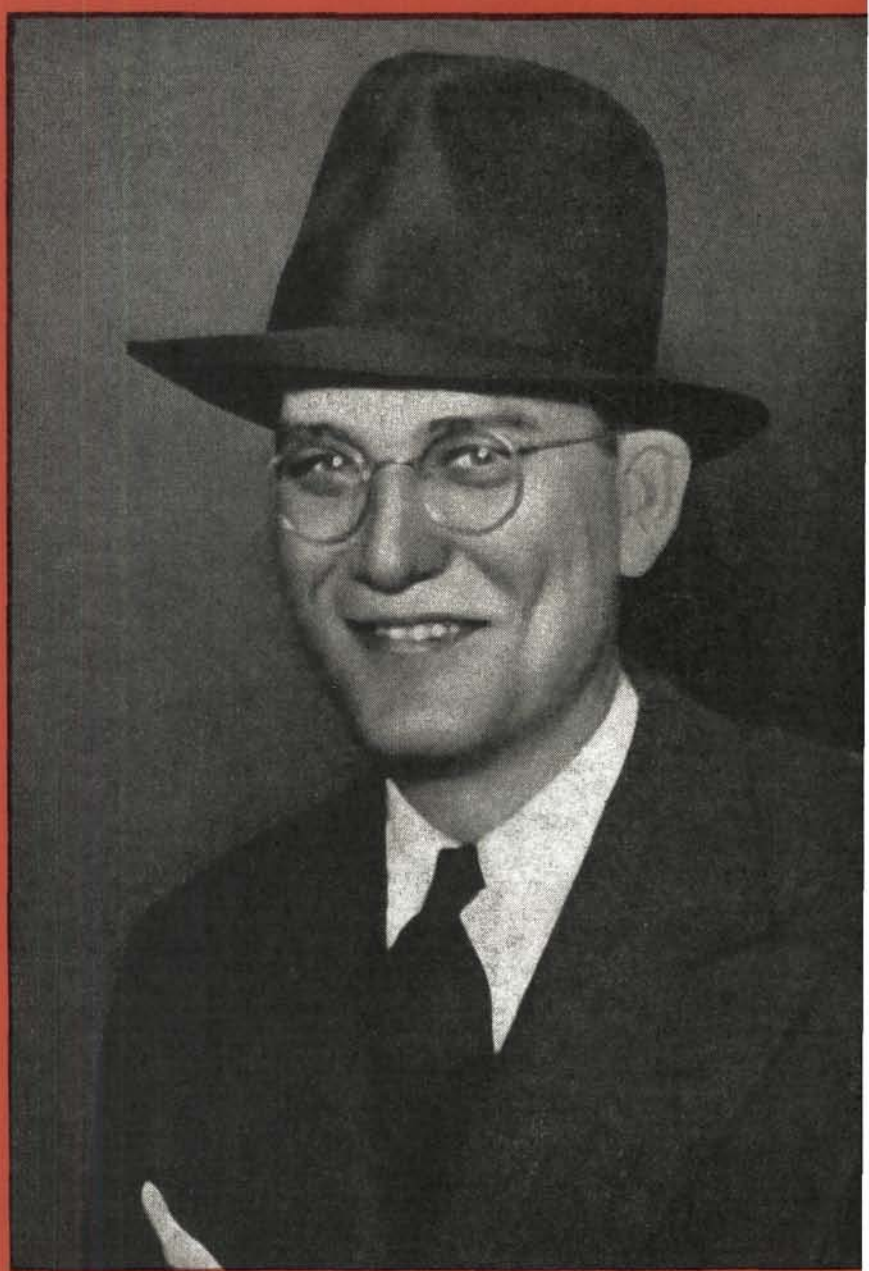

*Wide World Photos*

FRANK L. KLUCKHOHN: His is "the most realistic book about Mexico in half a decade" . . . *(See page 6)*

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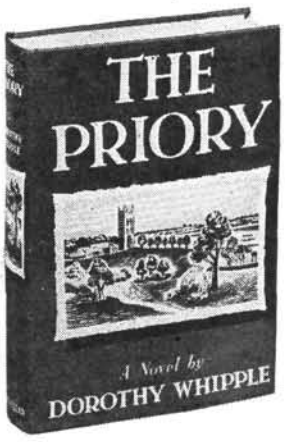


# THE PRIORY

## *By Dorothy Whipple*

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# One Book—the Almanac

BY DELLA T. LUTES

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Della T. Lutes

WHEN I was a little girl living in Southern Michigan—yes, and after I got to be a big girl and taught a deestrick school, the almanac was (as it had been for two hundred—and perhaps more—years) as definitely valued a factor in the amenities of living as a clock. In fact, the almanac and the clock companioned one another, both in the disposal of time and in their location in the home. The clock stood on a shelf in the kitchen and the almanac hung (by a string punched through its binding) on a nail driven in the shelf.

The almanac, however, held the whip hand, for a farmer could get up with the sun, go to dinner by the feel of his stomach and to bed when it was dark; neither could the clock tell how many eclipses there would be during the year, nor could it foretell the weather. The clock was a convenience, but the almanac was a necessity. By it the farmer planted his crops, mowed his hay, reaped his grain and arranged his social affairs such as going visiting in the winter when an unexpected snow storm might seriously interfere with travel, or in planning the church sociables.

Not all the almanacs that were familiar in the homes of our midwestern locality performed this service of prognostication, being either too cautious, or less familiar with those activities of planets which aided the astrologer in his forecasts. Jayne's "Medical Almanac and Guide to Health," for instance, conservatively offered only "conjectures of the weather," but then Jayne's was one of those we could get along without and was not treasured from year to year as were some of the others, notably—of our acquaintance—Hostetter's, Ayer's and Landreth's "Rural Register and Almanac." Of these, my father, being what was known as a "small farmer," which meant that he raised more "truck" than "crops," most highly regarded Landreth's, a veritable—and reliable—guide to the farmer. Landreth's Warranted Seeds bore the test of time and the "Rural Register" (first published in 1847) told you how to use them and gave volumes of agrarian advice. This almanac had its own special nail at the opposite end of the shelf from the others and was held sacred to my father's use. When the year was ended a new "Register" took its place but the old one was carefully stored in the huge top drawer of his own bureau along with packages of seeds, fishing tackle, a "wallet" containing deeds, notes, and a faded yellow sheet of foolscap paper which testified that somewhere prior to the Revolution, three brothers named, respectively, John, James, and William Thompson, had sailed from England and landed on the Massachusetts coast. The almanac was treasured for the sake of comparison, not only of astrological and climatic conditions, but as reference in husbandry. When the time approached for Rosy, the red cow, to calve, he looked back to the date, when the year before he had written on the margin, "Took Rosy to bull."

Landreth's "Rural Register and Almanac" held little interest for anyone in our family except my father, but the strings of the other two with which we were familiar, had frequently to be renewed. Of these two my father had some preference for Ayer's, not because of any great value placed on the apparently panaceaic qualities of Sarsaparilla or Dr. Ayer's Pills, but because of the faith (and pleasure) he had in the lyric measures with which weather conditions were foretold. If Ayer's almanac said "Cold—and—blustering" (in a sort of "Gobelins—'ll—git—you" style slithering down the page) from February the seventeenth to the twenty-first, he brought in an extra quantity of corn to shell for the hens and piled the wood behind the kitchen stove after the box was filled. If it said, "Look—out—for—frosts" on the first of June, he looked out for frost, lowered the top of the cold-frame where his early cabbage plants were growing, and anxiously sniffed the air as the sun went down.

Hostetter's "Illustrated United States Almanac" was especially popular with the lighter minded members of the family, for it had a precious disposition toward humor and made up in wit what it lacked in prognostication. This almanac was also, outside of *Godey's Ladies' Book, Frank Leslie's* and *Peterson's Magazines,* the only piece of illustrated literature that came to our midwestern hands. Ayer's (with mustard colored cover) had, to be sure, a few scattered exemplifications of the artist's skill, such as the bandaged head of a distressed individual suffering with neuralgic pains, a gouty foot (both relieved by the magic of Dr. Ayer's Pills), and a woman with a phenomenal growth of hair (Ayer's Hair Vigor).

Dr. Jayne's "Medical Almanac and

## Next Week

A NATURALIST TRANSPLANTED
By DONALD CULROSS PEATTIE

A JOURNEY ROUND MY SKULL
By FRIGYES KARINTHY
*Reviewed by Mabel S. Ulrich, M.D.*

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Guide to Health" showed the sharply relieved profile of a woman's head with a huge goitre, also a realistic section of tapeworm, all reasonably interesting to a morbid nature, but hardly worth mentioning on the same day with Hostetter's memorable half page (lifted bodily, one would judge, from some English book) delineating an artist's interpretation of contemporary wit.

On the cover (a sort of distempered green which yellowed with age) we made the acquaintance first, of St. George at everlasting odds with the Dragon—and, secondly the brazen gentleman who apparently had had a run-in with Taurus the Bull, or Leo the Lion to the obvious disadvantage of his inner works; but the real meat of the nut came to view when you opened the book upon Miss Soprano seated on a piano stool with her back to the instrument, smugly inquiring of the "cousin from rural districts" whether she had "dropped a note;" or upon the indignant diner who, with a napkin tied under his chin is exhibiting a singular looking object on the soup spoon. "Waiter" he says, "do you know what that is?"

**The North Wind Will Blow. From "The (Old) Farmer's Almanac."**

"That, Sir," replies the grinning waiter, 'looks like a mouse. We often find them in the soup, Sir. No extra charge, Sir."

Full half a dozen such happy interpretations of that day's humor lightened the more depressing recital of human ills—one a month for half the year, conned zealously for twice that time.

Both Ayer's and Hostetter's believed in relieving the humdrum existence of the farmer's life with merry quip and jest, and were triply cherished therefore. And—a jaded eye and ear judging by the weary round of so-called waggery over radio and on comic strip, calls them fair. Take this, for instance: A young man accused of laziness, was asked if he took it from his father. "I think not," said the impertinent youth, "Father's got all the laziness he ever had."—Or—What the milkman said when he found a fish in the milk: "Good heavens! The brindle cow's been swimming again." Or, worthy, it seems to us, of the more sophisticated journals of today:

*Young lady*: "Bub, won't you give me your baby sister? I love little babies." *Young hopeful*: "No—ma'am—I tant." *Young lady*: "Why won't you give your baby to me?" *Hopeful* (indignantly): "'Cause, she'd tarve to death. Your dress opens behime."

Of course, in the present day of enlightenment toward an infant's needs, this joke would fail of point, but in 1877 it carried weight.

Both Hostetters and Ayer's almanacs endeared themselves to the midwestern heart by offering an opportunity to laugh. God knows there was little enough occasion. But they also offered more substantial meat for the mental tooth: "How to clean marble"—for marble was a familiar medium in the furnishings of that time; how to make a pumpkin poultice; to cure a sty on the eye; receipts for sour cream cake and Queen of All Puddings (good enough to try today—if anybody still made puddings); how to cure warts with spirits of turpentine, or a sore throat with roasted lemon.

Adages, puns, conundrums, adorned the pages of these almanacs, some of them of a quality that makes one wonder how they have escaped the radio's eye: An Indian said that when he first heard of it, he was much surprised that the white men had killed their Savior, but when he knew them better he wondered that they didn't steal his clothes.

"When was Adam married? On his wedding Eve."

"On which side of a mule would you look for the most hair? The outside."

"As you cannot avoid your own company, make it as agreeable as you can."

"In an alphabetical race, which letter would be first in starting? 'S'."

"If you want to keep your boy at home, make it pleasanter for him than the street."

Certain almanacs were treasured beyond years of other usefulness by annotations on the margin: "Picked the first strawberries today." Or, on the interspersed blank pages, records of reference were made: "Sowed Early Rose potatoes." I have an old copy of "Herrick's Almanac" of the 80's in which are recorded births, deaths, visits, "Vandoos," illnesses, weddings, and the birth of a litter of thirteen pigs. "The mother laid on two and killed them. Then she ate them."

**The Fate of the Drunkard. From "The (Old) Farmer's Almanac." Both illustrations by courtesy of Little, Brown & Co.**

There was a "Michigan Almanac" which cost fifteen cents. Some of our neighbors occasionally bought one. My father never did. He could get all he needed out of those that were free. The "Michigan Almanac" was almost as good as a course at the Agricultural College or a reading of Blackstone in a country lawyer's office. It was crammed from cover to cover with informative paragraphs and statistics: Courts—open, circuit, supreme; names of all the States (twenty-two) with date of admission to the Union. Post offices, and railroad stations; Lake commerce; location of land offices, saleable lands and so forth. It was sponsored by the *Detroit Weekly Tribune* and stood for no nonsense. It posted you on when the sun entered Aries and spring began; on when the sun entered Cancer and summer began, when the sun entered Libra, autumn began. But we needed no such high-sounding gong to advise us on the change of seasons. Spring began when the pussy willows came out and the peepers sang; Summer began when the clover was ready to cut, and you knew when fall threatened by the turning leaves.

There was also a small almanac published in Cooperstown, N. Y., during the seventys and eighties, called "Phinney's Calendar or Western Almanac." For a little book it contained a surprising amount of information and a still more amazing amount of advertising—mostly school books, tracts and Sunday School books, and insurance. It also carried, in certain issues at least, advertisements of the ubiquitous Mr. Beadle's Dime Novels, hand books, and song books, of which there were astonishing numbers. In the year 1870, he named one hundred and seventy-six volumes of novels, song book collections numbering from one to twenty-three, and various school books, books of games, etc. I do not know how much distribution the almanac had, but in both volume and value of material, it ranked high and should be worthy of a considerable place in the roll of American almanacs.

"Poor Richard's Almanac" was prob-

(*Continued on page* 14)

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# Domestic Life at Saunby

*THE PRIORY. By Dorothy Whipple. New York: The Macmillan Company.* 1939. 528 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by AMY LOVEMAN

MISS WHIPPLE is possessed of quiet but excellent merits and though she writes fully in the tradition of the English country novel which has worn perilously close to a pattern of late she has enough wit and enough malice to give pungence to her tale. It is a story of family life among the upper middle class, set in a mellow old house, the Priory, where existence flows pleasantly and uneventfully along until the widowed Major Marwood takes to himself a young wife, and his daughters, until now left to their own sweet wills, present an outraged front against the invasion of their intimacy. The Priory, to be sure, has grown shabby with the years and Anthea Sumpton's money is a convenience to the Major whose one defense against growing debt has been to thrust his unpaid bills out of sight, and whose establishment has been conducted with extreme economy except for a brief effulgent period each August when the Major stands host to a visiting cricket team and pits his own, maintained as his one great extravagance, against it.

Anthea arrives at the Priory with love in her heart as well as cash in the bank, but under the hostility of her stepchildren and the middle-aged affection of her husband her emotion is swerved from an eagerness to lavish devotion on the family to a passionate attempt to reorganize and reëstablish it. To escape her zeal, the girls marry, Penelope without love, Christine a man with whom her union soon drifts on the rocks. The separation of the latter couple, the efforts of Christine to support herself and her baby, her relations with her parents-in-law, her sister, and the Priory family, and the final solution of her difficulties—these constitute Miss Whipple's story. A simple enough tale and one often told but here repeated with spontaneity and freshness.

**Jacket design for "The Priory"**

Miss Whipple writes with delicacy, with subtle insight and fine feeling; her detail though simple is effective, and her personalities and situations natural and convincing. Her plot never moves out of a narrow round but within that it has interest and vivacity and her characters act with authentic emotion. At the end, to be sure, there is a general distribution of happiness and good will that would have done Dickens proud, but by that time the reader has sufficient liking for the characters to rejoice in the completeness of their good fortune. Miss Whipple has made her personalities engaging, and their conversation has the informality, the spontaneity, and the happy give and take of real life. The book is exceedingly English in its portrayal, but is a picture of the England that we all like to believe still exists behind the alarms and fears which have thrown so tragic a shade over the country. It has sentiment, not sentimentality, and a quiet wisdom and understanding.

# A Double-Track Novel of Ohio

*STEPHEN AYERS. By James McConnaughey. New York: Farrar & Rinehart.* 1939. 434 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by RICHARD A. CORDELL

HERE is an American "Vanity Fair," its scene an Ohio city during the heady years of Coolidge prosperity and the enervating period of despair and disillusion that followed. Stephen Ayers, seven parts Rover Boy and one part Hemingway-Dos Passos tippler and philanderer, is in some ways representative of the prospering young business man of the nineteen twenties, on whom the depression struck its most stinging blow. The novel undertakes to trace not only the violent economic changes in American life, but also their social and moral repercussions. The narrative proceeds on a double track, Stephen's adventures in business, and his misadventures with women. The author does not succeed in effecting a junction, for the reader suspects that the characters would for the most part behave as they do whatever the economic and social temper of their milieu.

"Stephen Ayers" is full of echoes. Stephen's first wife is reminiscent of the detestable Mildred in "Of Human Bondage"—selfish, cold, and spuriously genteel. Their marriage explodes almost exactly like that of the Rawdon Crawleys in "Vanity Fair." There are pages that Hemingway or Sinclair Lewis might have written. There is,

**James McConnaughey**

however, no impression of plagiarism, and the novel proceeds under its own steam. The first part of the book is by far the most interesting with its Balzac-like portrait of the middle-class home and of the middle-class mind. Later the succession of furtive infidelities in country club high life, the pages of adolescent sex-talk, and the monotonous "Let's have another drink" become a bit wearying. Much more interesting are Stephen's trials as an industrialist in troublous times, but the devotees of the proletarian novel will be nettled by Stephen's paternalism and the laborers' docile acceptance of wage cuts and eventual employment. The fact, however, that the author has no political axe to grind in no way detracts from the interest and force of the somewhat ingenuous narrative.

Readers who hailed James McConnaughey's "Village Chronicle" three years ago as a more than promising first novel will probably be disappointed by its successor. Although "Stephen Ayers" has more sweep and tries to capture an era and a generation, it is inferior to "Village Chronicle" in psychology and in the presentation of an exciting central theme. Both novels suffer from an excess of platitudinous comment (nearly all of which could be omitted) and occasional passages of insipid writing; but both are written with a robustness and raciness peculiar to recent American fiction, and both succeed to some extent in illuminating certain phases of American life.

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# The Mexican Underdog

*THE MEXICAN CHALLENGE. By Frank L. Kluckhohn. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co.* 1939. 296 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by ERNEST GRUENING

THIS is the most realistic book about Mexico in half a decade. It is a forthright piece of journalism—fact and interpretation—by the *New York Times* correspondent whose frank reporting of totalitarian inroads below the border brought him into conflict with the Mexican authorities and caused his expulsion. This incident has not affected Mr. Kluckhohn's attitude. He is objective and balanced, though his sympathy for the Mexican people is manifest. The importance of this volume is that it is perhaps the first evaluation in some years unclouded by sentimentality, wishful thinking, or partisanship of one origin or another of the Mexican Revolution at the end of a generation.

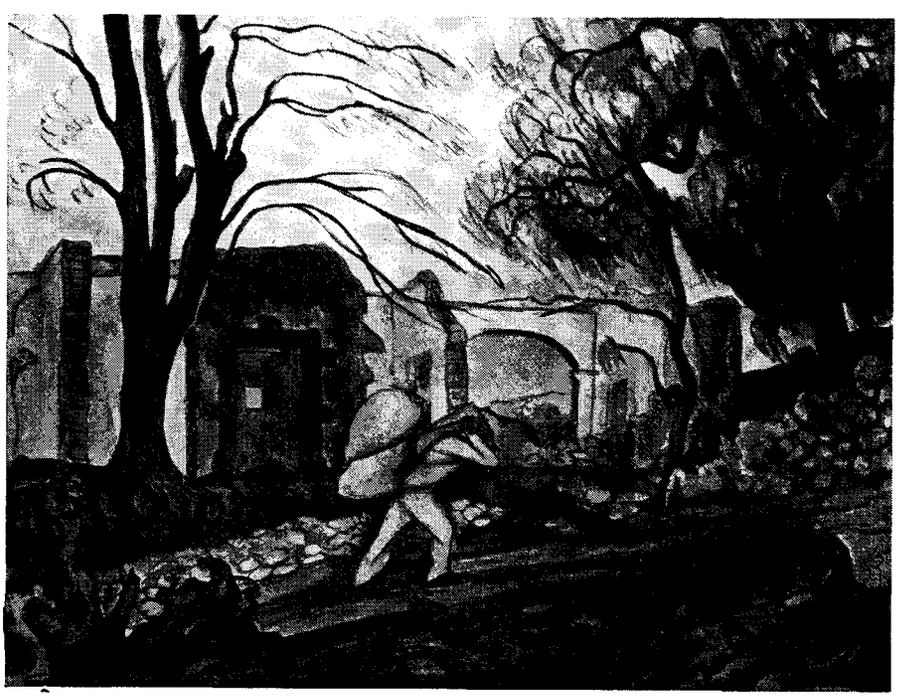
The writer's thesis is that the rapid nationalization and confiscation policies of the present regime have impaired the Revolutionary program of social and economic emancipation; that general hardship has increased; that real wages have fallen; that the Mexican under dog has merely changed masters. His latest overlords, the beneficiaries of the program, are labor leaders turned officials, politicians, generals. They now exploit the peon, deny him redress, since under the new dispensation they are the government representatives and wax fat in the process. A list of fourteen of these bosses' salaries, before and after the expropriation of the oil properties, shows increases ranging from 150 to 700 per cent. Meanwhile the workers, in whose behalf these drastic moves were presumably made, have received no wage increases. Actually, Mr. Kluckhohn considers them worse off.

This testimony is important, if true, because as the author points out, Americans have been the victims in loss of property and trade while the dictator states, Germany, Italy, and Japan, have benefited correspondingly. The paradox is that while Mexican officialdom professes distaste for the totalitarianisms of the right, its policies are playing directly into their hands. The contemporary Mexican educational system, while emphasizing Marxist doctrine, is, Mr. Kluckhohn contends, of such a nature that the child receiving it could easily be brought into the Nazi-Fascist orbit.

Because of these frank strictures it must not be assumed that Mr. Kluckhohn has written a hostile philippic. He believes that President Cardenas's integrity cannot be questioned. Under him, religious persecution has greatly diminished. A large measure of personal liberty exists. There are no political prisoners; there is none of the police persecution that characterizes some other Latin-American States. On the other hand the author points out that the democracy of which certain Mexican spokesmen boast is hardly a reality. Courts and Congress are creatures of the executives and do his bidding. Passages on the control of the press and on the actual censorship exerted are illuminating on that score.

The value of this book is that it serves as a corrective of the vast amount of adulatory literature on Mexico which has appeared in the United States in recent years. This output (apart from such as is clearly propagandist) reflects the genuine and deep sympathy of the American people with the aspirations of the Mexican people for a more abundant life. For over a decade, Washington administrations, reflecting a popular demand, have been militantly friendly and coöperative. Has the present leadership in Mexico taken unfair advantage of that good neighborliness and at the same time betrayed its obligations to its own people? Mr. Kluckhohn feels that after thirty years of Revolution it is time to take stock and ascertain the truth or falsity of the quip that "the Mexican masses have a great future—and always will have one." If the mild hurts of this friendly study are taken to heart, both North and South of the Rio Grande, a better and truer mutual understanding may result and replace the strain and mistrust that have recently developed.

*Ernest Gruening is the author of "Mexico and Its Heritage."*



**Ruined Mexican Estate. From a watercolor by Diego Rivera reproduced in "Portrait of Mexico," by Rivera and Wolfe (Covici-Friede).**

# Uncle Sam in the Role of Safety Man

*MILITARY STRENGTH OF THE POWERS. By Max Werner. Translated by Edward Fitzgerald. New York: Modern Age Books, Inc.* 1939. 324 *pp.* 95c.

Reviewed by
R. ERNEST DUPUY, MAJOR, F.A.

JAMES, my bedding-roll! We're off to the wars arm in arm—Uncle Sam and the Bear Who Walks like a Man! This, under a pretty, rose-tinted sugar coating, is the bolus Mr. Werner seeks to force down our throats behind the misleading title of "Military Strength of the Powers."

No critical analysis is this, but rather a glowing apologia for the Red Army, whose capabilities take up six of the fifteen chapters. Most of the other chapters contain comparisons of the forces of the U. S. S. R. with those of the other powers, and almost invariably the author is convinced of the superlative qualities of the former.

It is unfortunate indeed that this spirit of partisan optimism in the Red Army permeates the volume, rendering it absolutely worthless as a yard-

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stick. Space forbids detailed criticism. Loose statements, rationalization, distortion, clutter up the pages. According to the publisher's statement the author is a noted military authority who "cannot use his own name because of the possible reflection on relatives in his native land." It is translated—from what language one does not know—by Edward Fitzgerald, in London.

Mr. Werner's glib assumption that the United States is ready to leap again into the world arena bears some consideration. Is this a reflection of general opinion in Europe, or is it wishful thinking? In either case it is dangerous. The United States, he says, is today

> faced with the possibility of war on two fronts; land warfare in Europe, and naval warfare in the Pacific. . . . It is quite possible that a U. S. expeditionary corps would be ready earlier than a British to take its place with the allies on the Western front as part of the nucleus of a moto-mechanized shock army.

Follows this statement:

> The most important strategical ally for the U. S. A. in the Pacific would be the Soviet Union, and therefore the main weight of any defensive coalition would lie in a Russo-American alliance.

Discussing the possibilities of a Japanese-American clash the author points out quite properly that Japanese sea power threatens both Guam and the Philippines, our advance bases in the Far East. But a few pages further he puts Pegasus into full gallop with this startling gem:

> The Soviet Union could provide the U. S. A. with the one decisive element she lacks for naval warfare against Japan, namely an advanced base of operations. . . . The advantage of Japan's naval strategic position would be lost if the U. S. Navy appeared in the Bay of Vladivostock.

Just how, if Japan bars us from Manila, we can get to Vladivostok, he omits to state.

The author develops the thesis that Germany is a menace to world peace, far superior to Italy in strength and resources—quite logical, this, although his estimates of the German military capabilities are not accurate—and that she can be stopped only by a coalition. The elimination of Japan from the axis powers line-up can only be accomplished by aid of the United States.

In other words—and we've heard it before—Uncle Sam is cast for the role of safety man, a role hard for the American people to stomach. On second thoughts, we're not going. Put the bedding-roll back, James.

*Major Dupuy's book, "World in Arms," a study in military geography, is shortly to be published.*

# Amelia Earhart

*SOARING WINGS. By George Palmer Putnam. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company.* 1939. 294 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by GLADYS GRAHAM

WE are still land bound creatures enough to feel some magic in those who have taken to the air as by their natural right. Amelia Earhart began her flying career when both courage and vision were necessary for such a step on the part of a girl. She was the first woman flyer to catch the imagination of America and she held it safely through her successive adventures until that last flight when she started off so gallantly to girdle the earth but

**Amelia Earhart**

was caught and held by the unfriendly sea.

"Soaring Wings" is the story of the life of Amelia Earhart written by her husband, George Palmer Putnam. It is happily not a conventional biography. Very simply and unsentimentally Mr. Putnam tells enough of her early life and ancestry to place her for the unusual life that was to be hers. Her first visit to a flying field sealed her fate. After that it was wings and the air that continually called to her. The first high point in the book is reached with the famous "Friendship" flight across the Atlantic when conditions within the plane were as terrifying as the elements around. Fame pressed upon Miss Earhart even before she reached land. She reacted to it, as in all later experiences, modestly and with what we call "level-headedness," the quality that marked her, as it has Lindbergh, throughout lives that seemed calculated to make it impossible.

The story of her solo flight across the Atlantic is a thrilling one and many details which were not given at the time further add to the suspense which held during the hours when the crippled plane fought through the storm and flame to touch at last upon the Irish Coast. Mr. Putnam creates the atmosphere and tension of these flights with admirable restraint and economy of detail. They are heart-stopping in their bare reality.

While the emphasis of the book is on the "soaring wings" the story of Amelia Earhart's other interests, her writing, her venture into designing, and her capacity for friendship, her intense enjoyment of quieter aspects of life is given in enough detail to round a personality which will long be outstanding in the story of American women's achievement.

# Migrations

By ELSA GIDLOW

THEY have no home on the earth,
the unhomed,
the movers, the hungry,
they have no roots in the rich earth,
they have no home but a word.
but hope;
the word and the hope build no walls.
They have no home, they are homeless as water.
they rise as a wave,
they break on the earth,
take no root.
They have no home, they build home
of a word,
of a little love:
the love has no walls.

On all the shores of the world they have broken,
tide on tide, and the safe men trembling,
wave on wave, the meek, the menacing,
rootless as water, the unhomed;
with the feel of walls around them
and no walls,
with the feel of meat in the jaws
and meat rarely;
on all the shores of the world;
now this shore,
America
(and the safe men trembling)
tide on tide,
the unhomed,
the hungry men, the meek, the movers.
They broke like a flood on the Eastern shore,
(a few remained, joined the safe men);
the tide
moved,
moves with the sun
Westward,
over California,
over the valleys,
the unhomed with the feel of walls around them,
no home but a word.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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## A New Trend in Publishing

PRACTICALLY every one of the university presses has come into being because of a local desire to publish the results of the faculty's researches, usually scholarly monographs, in many cases highly important, but without much sales appeal. Publications of this sort naturally cannot interest the commercial houses, which must do better than make ends meet if they are to remain in business. University presses, therefore, satisfy a real publishing need and many of their contributions to knowledge have had an important influence on the thought and progress of the world.

It is obvious, however, that it takes money to engage in scholarly publishing. The majority of such books are rather technical, consequently expensive to manufacture and, as the market is limited, editions must be small, which in turn makes the cost per copy high. Frequently a university press book is priced arbitrarily at what it is considered the traffic will bear and the margin of receipts per copy over the cost of manufacturing and selling may be negligible or non-existent.

It is no secret that many university presses are not profit-making. There is nothing surprising about this, because the promotion of education and scholarship is not a money-making business. If every university must supplement its operating income by gifts, and income from endowments, it is only reasonable to expect that scholarly publishing also needs financial assistance. And university presses are subsidized usually by income from endowments, by direct grants from their universities, or by profits from their job printing departments.

In the past few years, however, income from endowments has dwindled; universities are unable to be as generous with their grants as formerly; printing profits too are scarcely as easy to come by as formerly. The point of this article is to suggest that these circumstances—and the fact that universities share our national craving for publicity—are having a very interesting effect, not only upon university press publishing, but on so-called commercial publishing houses as well.

The present writer remembers very well, early in his career as a scholarly publisher, having to tell a professor that the editorial committee had declined to approve publication of his manuscript; and their action was explained on the ground of the small potential sale and our current shortage of funds. (The professor was not told that if his opus had been considered important we probably could have found the money for it.)

"But," he objected, "that's what a university press is for."

Like all authors he thought his work important, and what he was trying to say was that the function of a university press is to publish the important, and unprofitable, books which cannot be placed with a general publisher. He was right, of course, and his point of view was entirely consistent. A university does not judge the researches of its faculty on the basis of whether or not the results can be translated into a profit. As a matter of fact anyone acquainted with the academic world knows that a scholar who popularizes his knowledge for gain is likely to lose caste with his fellows. Why then, if research is not for profit, should not publication of its results follow the same pattern?

Times are hard today, however, and "outside" income has shrunk. To keep the publishing deficit within reasonable bounds university presses are going out after more popular books, books which may make some real money. This is not to imply that they are shirking their obligations. They still publish scholarly, and unprofitable, books though of necessity they probably must think a little longer now than they used to about adding a sure loser to their lists. They are trying to finance these losses by taking on books of wider popular appeal. In other words, whereas they began life as specialists in a particular and previously uncultivated field of publishing, they are now stressing general publishing as well.

This comparatively new and increasingly popular trend means that university presses are now competing actively for authors with the so-called commercial publishers. They are going after books the stores will carry in stock, and which can be advertised to advantage in the magazines and newspapers of general circulation.

Ideally, of course, the bookstores should stock and push scholarly books as well as those of general interest. Unfortunately only a small percentage of our population is concerned with scholarly books, and the proprietors of bookstores must eat just like other people. The bookstores will not go to the university presses, so the university presses are coming to them.

It is an interesting development. Maybe it's a sound idea; if university presses can subsidize more scholarly books by publishing more books of general interest, they have a potent argument on their side. We wonder, however, if the general publishers appreciate the increasing keenness of their competition?

Finally we wonder also, if, in the words of our professorial friend years ago, that is what university presses are for. They all started out with the idea of providing a publishing outlet for worthwhile books which without assistance might never have seen the light of day. They are placing more and more emphasis today on books which will sell. Certainly no author of a book which will sell need depend upon a university press to publish it.

PAUL G. TOMLINSON

## Preserving the Present

A GENERATION in a hurry has small time for diaries and a race of apartment dwellers would have little place to store them even were they in existence. But time was when men and women of every age in numbers kept journals, and it is from them that later days have extracted some of the liveliest recording of the past that is to be found. For into the diaries, as into letters, went the small detail of daily living, the account of social functions, bits of gossip, description of persons and costumes and places and events which have been veritable treasure trove to the historian and the novelist. They were intended for the writer's eye alone and so were set down with complete frankness and often with lively annotations on the passing scene and players. Not even the movie, though it can reflect with perhaps greater fidelity its outward aspects, can preserve with such sprightliness the mood of a time. Perhaps it is because the diary has passed from fashion and that outlet is denied the apparently deep-rooted instinct for self-expression that there has been such a spate of autobiographies of late. Whatever the literary merits of these many volumes of reminiscence they serve a highly useful purpose if through them will be preserved for the chronicler of the future the sort of intimate and spontaneous picture of our times that the diaries of old furnished to ours.

A. L.

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# Letters to the Editor: *A Writer for Children Berates Current Juveniles*

## Children's Books

SIR:—Can you bear with me on the subject of children's books? I've just finished the Virginibus Puerisque guide and feel a little ill about it. There is not a book on the list I'd let a kid of mine (mythical) read. If I caught him reading such sugar pap I'd beat in his teeth—or give him Hecht's Miracles. What's the matter with the publishers, the children, the A. L. A. or the parents who rear such children?

Poor brats—at every turn they're confronted with a sugar coated hypodermic of information: "California, the Story of Our Southwest Corner," "Tili-Rili," "Come to France," "Magic Strings," "So-and-So's Treasure Bag of Game Songs," and a flood of pseudo-geography. A young man has to sneak out behind the barn to read Huck Finn these days. But the A. L. A. keeps anything real, honest, or good in the Locked Closet behind the librarian's desk. Let 'em go to the Bang-Bang-Shoot-'em-up-Ben movies for their "realism," says the A. L. A.—they shall not read anything which won't do the little baskets just worlds of good.

I'm a juvenile writer myself—in order to eat and because I like it—and I eat pretty well, so it's not a sour grapes thing. I've been anthologied; won the *Herald Tribune Prize* (money, thank God) and have published a lot of juvenile stuff. The stories in the kids' magazines—particularly *The American Boy* and *Boy's Life*—are *good*. They're real and honest; an author can't sneak a tale in 'em which depends for punch on a moral pointer. There's life in those tales, humor and realism and there are less editorial taboos than most slick magazines have. But, oh God, the books! What about this Newberry Prize winner, "Thimble Summer"? And what has happened to books like "The Dark Frigate" and Hawes's other stuff which used to take the prize each year? It's as recent as that—this collapse of juvenile books.

Aside from Tarzan and the lousy scientifiction the kids can sneak into the shops and buy and hide behind a baseball mitt, there are not four new kid's books on the market which a thinking child will read without a bribe. And where does that get them? Either they get permanently put off reading entirely, or they cop Maw's lurid library job while she's at the beauty parlor.

So what? Why can't juvenile writing get within yelling distance of good adult writing? Why can't there be books for the kids just coming out of childhood which will give them a desire for the reading to come, and a basis for judging what's good and bad in adult literature? Such a book, I think, should be well and sincerely written, the characters should be real kids (*i.e.*, bad, but with the ordinary amount of right instincts); it should have a water tight plot and good, clear, and real action to hold their attention. But the story itself should never make them say, "Jees, dis couldn't happen anywhere I ever been." Or let them get the cockeyed idea that everything in books is faked, hopped up, and they've been given this pretty book to see how "nice" little boys and girls act, so get something out of it, you ape.

But let a spot of blood, let a good round "damn" appear in a kid's book and the A. L. A.'s suede-clad thumb goes down on it. Little American children shall not know that life is real except from things printed on the sidewalks, and what Pop says when he comes home.

But I like writing for kids and am going on with a one man revolution, giving thanks to the publishers who will publish me, knowing beforehand that the A. L. A. won't let Robb White in the back door.

ROBB WHITE.

Marina Cay, Tortola,
British Virgin Islands.

"Have you a book that will let me off without a scolding?"

## Asa Shinn Mercer

SIR:—I am interested in securing material on Asa Shinn Mercer, particularly on his life in Texas.

DOROTHY WEINTZ.

Hyattville, Wyoming.

## Twain at the Teatro di San Carlo

SIR:—The "Innocents Abroad" contains no profounder truth than the opening words of Chapter XXV, Volume I: "There are a good many things about this Italy which I do not understand. . . ."

Mark Twain does not cite in this connection the attitude of a Neapolitan audience towards the once-celebrated soprano, Erminia Frezzolini (1818-1884), whom he heard sing in 1867 at a time when the exhaustion of her voice had virtually ended her career. In a passage of extreme virulence Mark describes the bad manners of the "high-born knaves" of Naples who applauded the singer only to force her to sing again and again while they alternately laughed and hissed the "old woman."

It is not likely that her singing was really good at this time—she was forty-nine and had sung rarely since 1853—but the Neapolitans were probably not guilty of the bad manners which were attributed to them. What Mark heard them utter was not hisses but the Italian word "Bis! Bis!" with which they signified their desire to hear Frezzolini sing an encore. This word has a sound curiously like an English hiss and the foreigner, unfamiliar with its meaning, might easily mistake the sound.

GEORGE MCCRACKEN.

Otterbein College
Westerville, Ohio.

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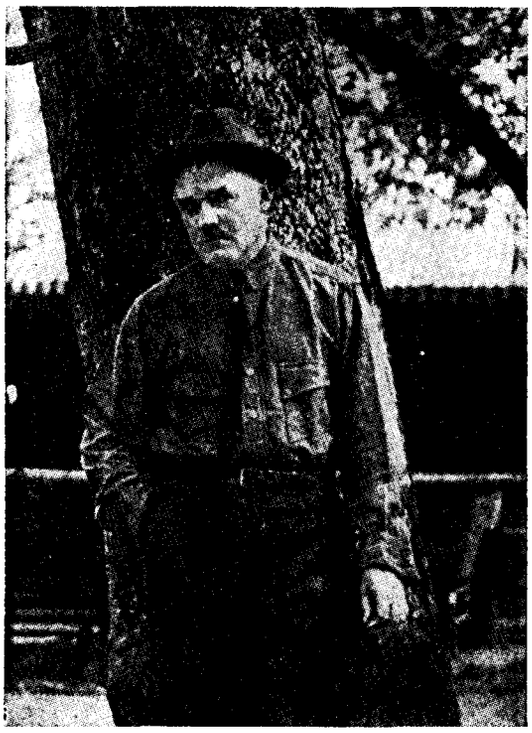
# H. L.: A Writing Man

BY BOOTH TARKINGTON



Harry Leon Wilson

HARRY LEON WILSON was a writing man. He hated the phrase "English prose" because he thought it pretentious; but English prose, made American, was what he strove to produce. He was a craftsman, didn't think or talk about the "art of writing," because he took his work too seriously for that; and, because he was also really an artist, he'd have borne severe torture rather than call himself one. His conviction was that language is a means, not for self-expression, but for communication; therefore he expressed himself with clarity. He never tried to get either beauty or humor into his work; both will be found there because they were in the temper and quality of the man himself.

Some of the kindly editorials written about him after his death might have given him a momentary grimness, could he have read them. He wouldn't have expected any editorials at all—he was a vacuum about "publicity"—but if he could have imagined beforehand any obituarial comment he would have expected it to run somewhat astray, and the moment's grimness just mentioned would have been his substitute for a laugh and "I thought so!" He l a u g h e d seldom, smiled rarely; his years of editing a professionally humorous journal hadn't left him much capacity for the physical expression of mirth—he'd investigated and corrected too many thousand jokes. One of the editorials, though, would have drawn at a corner of his mouth.

He'd have liked its friendliness, of course, because that quality was genuine. The editorial spoke of his singular genius in surprisingly introducing Lincoln's Gettysburg address into the filming of "Ruggles," bringing that solemn note suddenly into the midst of jocose passages. The episode will be looked for in vain in Wilson's book, and its appearance in the film affected his stomach, because, as I've said, he was really an artist. A contract had left him powerless to suppress the director's inspiration. Wilson wrote to me that when the "picture people" told him of their great Lincolnian idea his impulse was to respond, "Why not use the Lord's Prayer, too?" He didn't say it, because he was afraid they'd do it.

Another of the admiring and genuinely friendly editorials said something that he'd have accepted unregretfully; it said rather wistfully that he'd never received special distinction or high honor "at the hands of the aristocrats of literature," p o s s i b l y meaning that he'd never had a Pulitzer Prize or a great fuss made over him by metropolitan reviewers. Wilson would have agreed that the "aristocrats of literature" hadn't seen much in him; but he'd have done so because he'd forgotten. The National Institute of Arts and Letters, which, generally speaking, has c o n t a i n e d the best names in American arts and letters since its foundation, elected him to membership about thirty years ago; but probably only a few times since then did Wilson remember that he was officially of that distinguished group.

Moreover, there was a literary aristocrat who in his lifetime represented royalty itself to the minds of almost every American writing man. He was William Dean Howells, the most authoritative and penetrating critic of writing our country has known, and a good word from him in his lofty literary department in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* was the accolade. He was late in "discovering" Wilson; but when he did find him, at last, raised him to the peerage. Howells's delight in "Bunker Bean" and in "Ruggles" was profound; in "Ma Pettengill" it was an ecstasy.

Wilson could write anywhere, even on Capri, where, in the autumn of 1905 and the winter and spring of 1906, he lived in the beautiful, unbelievable villa that Elihu Vedder had built there. Vesuvius was meditating an eruption, just across the bay, and the fire works display from the mountain became more and more prodigious until the final great eruption of 1906. Wilson sat at a desk, unceasingly playing his own game of solitaire that he'd invented and at intervals setting down the cards to make a note for the novel that engaged him.

After the volcano had spent itself, he came to Paris, took rooms in the Boulevard Raspail, and wrote. He'd never seen Paris before and wouldn't look at it—he was writing. Every afternoon at four o'clock he walked a block or two to the Café du Dôme (not in those days a sight for tourists) and played cards during exactly two hours; then went home and wrote again. It took me about three months to convince him that he ought to spend a morning in the Louvre and at least half an hour in the Sainte Chapelle. He did, somewhat grudgingly, and immediately returned to his work in the Boulevard Raspail and his cards at the Dôme.

Then, being young and irresponsible, I lightheartedly coaxed him away from both, got him out to the country and a house over the Marne to write a play with me. One of the editorials I've mentioned spoke of this play, saying that it "glorified" a rustic American type, and this again

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would have brought Wilson a brief grimness, for it was a reminder of the unforeseen and rather absurd pure accident that made our first play written together outrageously "box-office" and gave it a run of plethoric years.

A manager had asked for a play about Indiana to fit a "star" of his, and Wilson and I decided that an "Indiana type" would be theatrically effective if seen against an exotic background. Therefore we projected an untraveled young Kokomo lawyer of only local experience into Sorrento.

**Booth Tarkington**

Both Wilson and I had often delighted in the complaints and the innocent bragging of Americans who were abroad for the first time and looked upon the continent of Europe as uncomfortable and degenerate. We'd even collected expressions of strong feeling we'd heard uttered by some of these —bits of stalwart patriotism, which we put into the mouth of our Kokomo wanderer. Otherwise we made him as agreeable as we could and of course gave him a comedy-melodrama triumph in the end. Our feeling was that the audiences (if there came to be any) would laugh at him with us when he complained of Europe and bragged of America; but that they would indulgently forgive him his nonsense and like him in spite of it.

The American audiences, when the play was put before them, did nothing of the kind. When our young man announced from the stage that he wouldn't "trade our State Insane Asylum for the worst ruined ruin in Europe" they didn't laugh at him forgivingly, they applauded thunderously. In all such matters they felt as he did. Shocked play-reviewers who had been abroad heard this applause and thought that Wilson and I had slyly planned to produce it; they announced that we had written "bunkum." Audiences promptly increased in numbers and in noise; and the two astounded playwrights, as innocent of the critics' charge against them as they were of inciting the audiences' one-hundred percent enthusiasm, were besought to write more plays.

We did—eight or nine, I think. Wilson, always workmanlike, took up with me the task of filling orders. For several years we were collaborating playwrights, and then, almost without forewarning, he faded away. "We'd written an honest little comedy that fell into the hands of a much beloved actress who knew what the public wanted. They wanted her, she said, just her, and what she did to our play—to make it her—became with every reheasal just that much more upsetting. I think it was from Montreal, an evening or two before the Poughkeepsie try-out, that I received a telegram from Wilson, mentioning that he was on his way to Banff. I didn't see him again for nine years.

Then, after he'd written "Bunker Bean" and "Ruggles" and "Ma Pettengill," in California, he came to join me in Maine, to construct some more plays. He waited to see a few rehearsals of the first ill-fated little series we did then—and faded away again, this time permanently from my sight. He went back to California to write "Merton of the Movies" and to be vaguely astonished by its popular success and by what was paid him for the subsequent serials that he wrote. He gave most of it away.

In 1902 Wilson became a "best-seller" with "The Spenders," and, because he was really a writing man, he threw his best-sellerness away the next year with that penetrating and somewhat somber historical novel about the Mormons, "The Lions of the Lord." Then he wrote "The Boss of Little Arcady," a novel obviously by a man charmingly in love; and after that "Ewing's Lady." These books are out of print, of course, and may remain so. Probably they fall into the class of forgotten novels, a matter understandable since such masterpieces as "The Damnation of Theron Ware" and "The Grandissimes" are now forgotten novels. "Ma Pettengill," "Ruggles," and "Bunker Bean" aren't yet forgotten; it would be a pleasure to think that they won't be. Such books are harder to write than are tragedies; they need a rarer talent than do searchingly realistic explorations into toughness or profoundly formless aphrodisiacs for the adolescent minds of the physically adult. Wilson never dropped down into the easier kinds of writing.

Once he stopped, did almost no work at all for more than a year; and during that time I hadn't even a letter from him. Then he wrote me:

> I've been reading—reading some books I'd never read and rereading some I had. Hegel, Kant, Schopenhauer, Spinoza, Herbert Spencer, Tyndall, Huxley, Nietzsche; a dozen others. So now I know everything —the nature of matter, the law of life and the universe, all about what man is, whence he came, where he's to go, and why. It's a wonderful thing to know all this and to be sure that I'm now able to solve all questions.

He always ruggedly enjoyed his own discomfitures.

A few years ago his head was hurt in a motoring accident, and after that his memory began to fail him at times —times that were gradually more and more frequent. This was a calamity that he took in his own strides; no blow on the head or in the heart ever got a wince or a murmur out of him. He planned a novel—one that would say of this present world all that his life had given him to say of it—and, when he found the story to carry this burden, and made a synopsis, he sat down day after day to play solitaire and take his notes. At these he worked hard, pondering both deeply and eagerly, and some of them, now and then, he sent to me. I found them stirringly brilliant, noble in wisdom, and urged him to begin the manuscript. He couldn't, for now his memory grew so queer that he had to have somebody with him when he walked abroad, because by himself he couldn't find the way home. Still he worked, set down the cards as he dealt them, took notes and planned his book. He made notes, planned the book and worked upon his thought for it, the day that he died. He was a writing man.

*Copyright, 1939, Paramount Pictures, Inc.*

**Charles Laughton as Ruggles of Red Gap**

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# The Film as a Recording Machine

*DOCUMENTARY FILM. By Paul Rotha. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.* 1939. 320 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by IRIS BARRY

EVERY motion picture is, in one sense, a document for it inevitably contains imbedded within it various kinds of information about the individuals and the society which produced it. The fashions of its particular time are recorded in it, however unintentionally, as regards ideas and opinions as well as regards clothing and speech. This is true even of costume or historical pictures, for we find that a film such as the Sara Bernhardt "Queen Elizabeth" or the Garbo "Queen Christina" usually tells us more about the era in which these particular actresses flourished than about ancient times.

But in a more special sense, the motion picture has been used since its beginnings as a recording machine. Important events—war, coronations, disasters—and exotic landscapes have always been attractive to it. The newsreels date from 1910. Travel films have been popular since they were run in simulated railway coaches in 1903. And in this work of reportage, an important step was taken by Robert Flaherty when he attempted to set the life of an Eskimo on the screen in "Nanook" and, while doing so, to enrich and humanize it by interpreting and selecting the photographic material so as to present a particular point of view or opinion about it. To many lovers of cinematography, "Nanook" was the first true documentary film in the stricter sense in which it has recently been used, and Flaherty's later "Moana" and "Man of Aran" stand out as masterpieces in this particular field.

Latterly another kind of documentary film has developed. These are, as a rule, sponsored films made in order to express an opinion, to create good-will, or to carry a message. Just as some large industrial concern puts a program of concerts on the air, so in England other industrial concerns have similarly sponsored films illuminating some facet of social life. More important perhaps, the English government itself has undertaken film production. The Post Office, notably, has issued quite a number of intelligently-conceived motion pictures calculated to bring home to the English taxpayer exactly what services are being performed for him by that department. Neither these nor the others sponsored by industry have been what are commonly known as advertising films: but they might come under the heading of public relations. Young men of particular enthusiasms have entered this field of production —musicians, writers, and others who feel that in the film lies a new medium for the expression of faiths and opinions.

*Courtesy of Museum of Modern Art Film Library*

**Still of "Moana of the South Seas," by Robert Flaherty.**

Better known in this country, of course, are the admirable films—also government made—of Pare Lorentz, "The Plow That Broke the Plains" and "The River." These set before the citizen problems that face him and his elected representatives and, at the same time, suggest solutions. Even more recent are films like Joris Ivens's "Spanish Earth" and "The 500,000,000" which examine and definitely take sides in current conflicts. In another mood "The City" has lately looked into the vital question of slum-clearance and town-planning.

Mr. Rotha's book traces the whole development of this approach to the use of the motion picture as an educative, clarifying, persuasive, and propagandist medium. In this, the second edition, he has added much new information and defines the purpose of documentary film, as he understands it, as an attempt to "bring to life" certain essential factors and problems of modern experience. This explanation is usefully supplemented by a further definition, given in a lucid preface by John Grierson, who says that the documentary film is attempting to close the gap between the citizen and the community and that it is seeking new ways, as radio has also done, of educating public opinion in a democracy. All who are interested in education in its broader sense will find this book of very considerable interest, while those interested solely in the motion picture for its own sake will find it a mine of information. The appendix with its copious data on directors and on films is especially useful: the book is essential to any decent library.

There are those who will consider the whole topic of British documentary film one of relatively narrow interest, since few of the films are to be seen here and then only semi-privately. It is perhaps true that its practitioners take themselves a trifle seriously and that Mr. Rotha—who is one of the most noted of them—writes at moments with a pontifical and almost immodest finality. There are, after all, other possible opinions about much that he states. He has a tendency, I feel, to attempt to restrict the medium itself and to insist overmuch what is and what is not good documentary film or, even, documentary film at all. But this is a fault that arises from enthusiasm and from a particular vocation. His comments on the social aspects of the cinema alone, not to mention the admirable illustrations, the useful appendix, and much else of real merit in the book, much more than outweigh it.

*Iris Barry is curator of the Film Library of the New York Museum of Modern Art.*

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# A Land with Little History

*AUSTRALIA: HER HERITAGE, HER FUTURE. By Paul McGuire. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company.* 1939. 349 *pp.* $3.50

Reviewed by JAMES FREDERICK GREEN

THE average American, when hearing the word "Australia," probably thinks of convicts, kangaroos, and koalas. Australia unfortunately remains, as it once appeared on maps, a *Terra Incognita*. Here is a delightful book that surveys the entire continent and describes not only the kangaroos but also landscapes, harbors, aborigines, deforestration, and social problems. Mr. McGuire, a young Australian author of detective stories, has an eye for the picturesque and a gift for colorful narrative. The constantly interesting text is enhanced by pages of excellent photographs, including a particularly appealing one of a koala family. Mr. McGuire's book, written with enthusiasm, understanding, and humor, is the best work of its kind that this reviewer has seen in recent years. It is such a model of description and analysis that one wishes Mr. McGuire might study fifty or sixty other countries.

The framework of the volume is a travelogue, for Mr. McGuire travels back and forth across his homeland. Sydney suggests the early history of

**The Australian**

the Australian colony; Canberra, the constitution and party politics; Melbourne, slums and cricket; Adelaide, agriculture and the wool industry; Peterborough, erosion and the expanding deserts. Every village and street-corner suggests some amusing bit of history or folk-lore, some quaint character out of the past or present, some lusty poem or native song. Underlying this extraordinary collection of facts and fantasies is a very serious concern for the economic and political future of Australia, endangered by such diverse forces as deforestration, declining birth rate, Japanese imperialism, and the uncertainties of international trade. Still, "there has been no serious trial of arms on Australian territory. If the country without a history is happy, then Australia should be almost happy." Mr. McGuire fails only to provide his reader with a one-way passage across the Pacific.

# Five Countries

*WHAT TO SEE AND DO IN SCANDINAVIA. By George W. Seaton. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc.* 1939. 435 *pp., with index.* $3.50.

*BIRCHLAND. By Joran Birkeland. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.* 1939. 247 *pp.* $2.50.

*PETTICOAT VAGABOND AMONG THE NOMADS. By Neill James. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.* 1939. 350 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by AGNES ROTHERY

GEORGE W. SEATON'S book is precisely what its title indicates. Here, in a single volume of convenient size and weight, is an up-to-date guide on the various routes and ways to reach Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland: what clothes and luggage to take: what hotels and pensions to write ahead to for reservations—a necessary precaution in the summer season. The suggestions on "what to buy" in every locality will tempt the shopper, the lists of places of significance will satisfy the sightseer. The information as to food and weather, types and prices of land and water transportation, is explicit and reliable, and brief outlines on the separate and intermingling histories of the five countries, good photographs and maps, will clarify their relations to each other and help in finding one's way through the principal cities. Practically worked out itineraries are planned to fill the schedules for a two weeks' or a two months' holiday. It is written, not for the arm-chair traveler who might find the detailed tabulation bewildering, but for the traveler who is compiling plans for all or some of these excursions. It is a well-arranged and succinct handbook and will be of greatest value to any one who is touring these happily situated and wisely governed countries which have recently come into their proper place in the estimation of other nations as well as of American vacationists.

If Mr. Seaton's volume is a streamlined bus to carry as many passengers as want to go all over Scandinavia accompanied by a clearly enunciating guide-conductor, Joran Birkeland's "Birchland, A Journey Home to Norway" is a smaller, more intimate vehicle—perhaps the simple, two-wheeled

**Travelling by pulkka in Lapland. From "Petticoat Vagabond."**

"stolkjaerre" holding only the driver and a single passenger and jogging along a route chosen solely to please the writer. It will also please such readers as care to climb up beside her and enjoy a leisurely round of a few visits to Norwegian homes.

Joran Birkeland—who in her translations of Gosta af Geijerstam's delicately limpid little novels has revealed her sensitiveness of feeling and command of English—was born in Montana of a Norwegian father and mother. Although she knew none of her relatives in the old country and had never been invited to come back and make their acquaintance, after the death of her parents she yielded to her impulse to seek out their kinsfolk and, in coming into touch with them, come also into a deeper understanding of the long, vague line of ancestors from whom she had sprung and the land which was their background, their present home, and their means of livelihood. "I went to Norway because I knew I would feel at home there," she says simply. "And I needed to feel at home somewhere."

It was an unpretentious journey back to Norway and it is described with a fidelity that gives it a quiet value, not only for the stay-at-home reader who can take time to travel by imaginary "stolkjaerre" but for the bona fide traveler who will this coming summer whiz through all Scandinavia on the stream-lined bus. That she was able, in two months, to come into such appreciation is a tribute to her initiative and tact, for certainly the relatives were in no way overburdened with these qualities. That she has been able to convey to her readers the reticences and genuine goodness of middle-class Norwegian folk, the effect upon them of their stern and majestic natural environment, their simple ways of living, and their habits of thought, is a tribute to her ability as a writer.

Lapland is that part of Scandinavia

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"lying just nine degrees south of latitude 80° which rims the North Pole" and "consists of sections of northernmost Norway, Sweden, Finland, and a bit of northwestern Russia . . . an area about the size of that section of the United States which lies east of the Mississippi River." In a political sense it is non-existent and its inhabitants—who speak of themselves as "Samieds"—do not use the word Lapland in referring to their homeland.

A fair number of travelers have seen, and every year more plan to see, some part of this region in their Scandinavian tours. Norwegian Lapland is easily reached by boat and plane: Swedish Lapland by train, and Finnish Lapland by a bus which traverses the only motor highway—and a good one it is—to the Arctic. But the majority of those travelers visit this sparsely settled, sparsely vegetated expanse only in summer. Miss Neill James elected to visit it in winter when the Northern Lights and the moon and the stars transform snow and ice into a crystalline universe, and when the Lapps are busy with those reindeer round-ups which resemble cattle round-ups in our West. The comfortable inns which make the summer trip an easy one are closed or practically empty during those months when the sun does not rise above the horizon, and for transportation over certain distances one must depend upon reindeer and the small, single-passenger, single-runnered sleigh, or "pulkka."

Miss James spent six months, in 1937-1938, traveling 15,000 miles back and forth in this Lapland—some of these miles on her stomach holding on to the one rein which was attached to her left arm and a wildly bounding reindeer, while the overturned "pulkka" was temporarily left behind on a snag or a snowdrift. She went fishing off the coast of Finland and was seasick, and tried it again off the coast of Norway and wasn't seasick. She visited iron mines and schools and the monastery of Valamo on the island between Finland and Russia. She ate reindeer stew and fish cooked with their heads and tails and scales and entrails. She took steam baths and afterward rolled nude in the snow. She lived in Lapp huts and tents and slept fifteen in a room and gathered a lot of information and stories, and imparts both her knowledge and her zest to this good-sized, informal, and well-illustrated volume, avoiding the temptation to which too many "vagabonds" succumb, of either exaggerating her discomforts or minimizing them into a joke.

*Agnes Rothery has traveled widely in the Scandinavian countries, and is the author of several books dealing with them.*

## One Book: The Almanac

(*Continued from page* 4)

ably the earliest of the almanacs published in this country (1687) and its fame, particularly because of the maxims and aphorisms for which it was noted, will doubtless stand forever at the top of the roster of this type of American literature.

"The Old Farmer's Almanac" (which did not, in general, reach our midwestern country but which, to the more sober and literate East, offered equal unquestioned informative material) also carried a side line of weather prognostications, but in a far less spirited style. Where, for instance, "The Old Farmer" for the last of July, 1874, pessimistically prophesied "uncomfortable weather with frequent showers," Dr. Ayer's admitted "scorching heat," but supplemented the statement with the more heartening "Fine hay weather."

This "Old Farmer's Almanac," sedate, informative, dependable, and convincing as one might expect from its source, was then, as it is today after a hundred and thirty-six years of consecutive publishing, a substantial volume of miscellaneous but well directed information. The man who fain would study the skies, (and, amazingly, many an humble farmer did) could use the "Old Farmer's Almanac" as a text book with confidence. My own father, with only the lesser ordinary almanacs to go by, sat with me on many a starlit night and traced for my childish pleasure the Milky Way, the Great and the Little Dipper, and read for me a tale written by the stars far more fascinating than any the millions of books of today provided for my children seem to do. His translation was doubtless crude, perhaps often wrong, but at least it taught me that there *was* a sky, showed me its sustaining and comforting beauty, and instilled a habit of looking *up*. (One of the first things I ever bought for him after I began earning money, was a simple book of astronomy.)

"The Old Farmer's Almanac" (which sold then and still does for fifteen cents), in common with others, also announced the eclipses of the year but added considerable other information such as: names and characters of the aspects; names and characters of the signs of the zodiac (from which my cousin Cory and I once contrived ourselves a secret alphabetical code which resembled a cross between Achibbiddi and Glagoutic); chronological cycles, movable feasts and fasts, and a table of tides, a feature that I regret being denied. Any mention of the mysterious, seemingly mythical sea was a prick to the imagination of the inland child.

Almost all almanacs were moral in tone, and the older ones definitely religious. They were, therefore, a marked influence on character. Even the stanzas of verse which decorated the calendar pages of many were spiritual in tone, or, at least, inspirational.

In a perusal of old almanacs (dating back of a hundred years) one is impressed by their changing character as other reading matter found its way to the scattered and often isolated homes. In the 1700's, the almanac was a compendium of serious information, unleavened by wit or humor. Of these the "Vermont Register and Almanac" was most voluminous. It apparently had no sponsor except the house publishing it at Montpelier, and it was (at least those I have examined were) over one hundred pages in length. There is no indication on the volumes I have been able to study (1818-1821) that it was sold for a price but it must have been. It carried indispensable information—lists of post offices and postmasters, and of practising attorneys throughout the state; town clerks, jurors (with fees), literary institutes; together with aphorisms; short fables inciting charity and economy, and always the marginal notes: "March 7th—Joseph's heifer calved;" "Dec. 1, 1819—"Turned ram to sheep."

"The North American Almanac and Gentleman's and Lady's Diary" for the year of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1776. (Calculated—like "The Old Farmer's" "for the medium of Boston and New England") contained, besides all the features of other almanacs including a list of Friends' Meeting Places, occasional bits of verse, the credit for which it would seem should go somewhere other than just to the good judgment of the compiler; for example the "Bacchanal on the Earth's Drinking Habits" whose author was not a poor disciple of the famed maker of tents:

The thirsty Earth soaks up the rain
And drinks and gapes for rain again;
The planets suck in the earth and are
With constant drinking, fresh and fair;
The sea itself, which one would think
Should have but little need of drink
Yet drinks ten thousand rivers up
So fill'd that they o'erflow the cup:
The busy sun—and one would guess
By's drunken fiery face no less,—
Drinks up the sea, and when he's done
The moon and stars drink up the sea.
They drink and dance by their own light,
They drink and revel all the night:
Nothing in nature's sober found.
But an eternal health goes round:
Fill up the bowl then! fill it high!
Fill all the glasses there; for why
Should every creature drink but I?
Why? Man of Morals—tell me why!

The almanac and the Bible were without doubt the two greatest medi-

(*Continued on page* 16)

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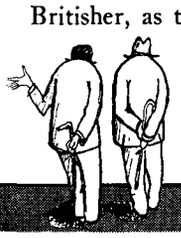

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### One Book: The Almanac

(*Continued from page* 14)

ums for influence upon the lives of people from earliest days of settlement in this country—as well as others—to the time when, in the nineteenth century, a book ceased to be little less than a miracle. An almanac was not only a source of entertainment—which it decidedly was—through its paragraphs of wit and wisdom, but the only volume of reference to which the common people had access. Whether the Bible or the almanac wielded the greater power is perhaps a debatable matter. The Bible was a threat held over the head and a rainbow before the eye. But the almanac took a man by the hand on the first of January year in and year out and led him through vicissitudes of wind and weather. In the progression of time and opportunity for news gathering its scope of usefulness widened and one almanac vied with another in assembling and disseminating information. In the seventies and eighties it told when and where Court would convene; served as a road map; acquainted the reader with national affairs; gave statistics regarding army, navy, development of railroads, canals, and the opportunities for commerce. Through its fun and humor, it sharpened the wits; by proverb and adage it aroused thought, provoked judgment. It gave some good medical advice and much that was worthless. In this particular some almanacs were worse than others. Those sponsored by patent medicine could ruin the best of health by consistent and imaginative reading, let alone, application.

Mr. Clarence S. Brigham, director of the National Antiquarian Society at Worcester, Mass. (where is a collection of thirty-five thousand almanacs, the largest in the world) in his bulletin, "An Account of American Almanacs," quotes a paragraph from Moses Coit Tyler's "History of American Literature" in which the case of the almanac is so clearly faced, that it seems to me I can do no better, in closing, than to requote the same:

> No one who would penetrate to the core of early American literature, and would read in it the secret history of the people in whose minds it took root and from whose mind it grew, may by any means turn away, in lofty literary scorn, from the almanac—most despised, most prolific, most indispensable of books, which every man uses, and no man praises; the very quack, clown, pack-horse, and pariah of modern literature, yet the one universal book of modern literature; the supreme and only literary necessity even in households where the Bible and the newspaper are still undesired or unattainable luxuries.

## Caroline the Great

*CAROLINE OF ANSBACH. GEORGE THE SECOND'S QUEEN. By R. L. Arkell. New York: Oxford University Press.* 1939. 338 *pp., with index.* $4.25.

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT

"BECAUSE notoriety often outlives merit, 'Queen Caroline' to most people connotes George IV's wife, who was never crowned as his consort. Her divorce and the clamor she made at his coronation have exercised a hold upon the public mind quite undeserved by such a mediocre character. If this book makes her illustrious predecessor, Caroline of Ansbach, better appreciated it will not have been written in vain." With this pious avowal Mrs. Arkell introduces her study of the remarkable woman whose tact and foresight gave to the Hanoverian dynasty its first real hold on the loyalty of the English people. Biographically this Caroline has been strangely neglected. Historians like Lecky and Trevelyan have quietly praised her; Walter Scott presented her unforgettably in "The Heart of Midlothian;" but the popular biographer has passed her by, probably because her self-effacing rationalism would lend itself neither to the adulation of romance nor to the ridicule of satire. Mrs. Arkell has prudently avoided both romance and satire. Writing primarily for the general public, she has told the Queen's story accurately and simply, without hair-splitting or excessive argument; and at the same time she has supplied the scholar with a valuable and (in notes modestly relegated to the final pages) fully documented treatise upon a figure whose importance has long demanded such an investigation.

In all but name Caroline was the ruler of England from her husband's accession to the throne in 1727 to her death in 1737. George was a fussy, irascible, difficult person whose whims were violent but predictable. She knew exactly how to manage him without his knowing that he was being managed. His vanity was soothed, his pride strengthened, while she exercised the powers of a sovereign. It was no easy task, complicated as it was by family discord between husband and son, but her fortitude and experience were equal to it. In Sir Robert Walpole she recognized the statesman of the hour, and it was through her diplomacy that his practical knowledge was enabled, without royal interference, to steer the nation through so many years of recuperative peace. With her death and Sir Robert's increasing age, their policy fell on evil days but not before it had accomplished its chief purpose.

Mrs. Arkell has understood Carolina as one woman understands another and has admired her not only for what she achieved but also for the character which made such achievements possible. That quiet and just admiration has given strength and beauty to her portrait.

## Wordsworth and His Friends

*WILLIAM WORDSWORTH OF RYDAL MOUNT. By Frederika Beatty. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.* 1939. 307 *pp., with index.* $3.75.

Reviewed by ALEXANDER COWIE

MISS BEATTY'S book would have been better if she hadn't brandished a thesis in the foreword. She thinks that Wordsworth's conservatism in old age has been exaggerated, and she pits herself against Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, the poet's first biographer, whom she holds responsible for the distortion in our present-day view of the sage of Rydal Mount. But Dr. Christopher's book is pretty well dead by now, and Miss Beatty would have to face a heavy battery of modern scholarship in order to establish her position. When in later life Wordsworth revised "The Prelude," to cite one obstacle, he not only improved its lines but also installed shock-absorbers for the benefit of churchgoing readers. Surely this was a very different Wordsworth from the youthful colleague of Coleridge. True, Miss Beatty shows that there were elements of continuity in the poet's life. While his religious and political opinions wheeled about, certain character traits remained steadfast. But it would be hard to prove that there was an "essential unity in his mind and work from first to last.' Miss Beatty never really comes to grips with her opposition. Indeed she appears to forget, after a time, that she ever declared war, and settles down to the trade of straight biography.

Once assured of Miss Beatty's fundamentally peaceful aims, the reader begins to enjoy her ample budget of domestic news about Wordsworth, his family, and his friends. In no sense does the book compete with Edith Batho's "The Later Wordsworth," for Miss Beatty confines herself almost entirely to fireside facts and personal relationships. If it is news about Wordsworth, implies the author, it is important news—whether the subject be a "tea-drink" for local children, a rubber at whist with Crabb Robinson, or a talk with Tennyson. The book as a whole is substantial, well documented, and unpretentious.

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# G. K. C.

*G. K. CHESTERTON. By Maurice Evans. New York: Cambridge University Press. (Macmillan)* 1939. 157 *pp.* $1.75.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THIS monograph on one of the greatest wielders of paradox in our time, a writer of exhilarating imagination who is likely to live in literature far more for his poetry and prose fantasies than for his dialectic, is a fair-minded examination of his background, his progress from an early agnostic socialism into the fold of the Catholic Church, his political beliefs, his novels, essays, and poems, his style and argument. There is not the slightest doubt that Chesterton possessed a touch of genius. It was the genius of a poet, which he endeavored to develop into a complete philosophy. It is true that he combined "great variety of expression with extreme consistency of thought," though some of the conclusions at which he brilliantly arrived are not satisfactory to the present reviewer. A fighting optimist at a time, in the late nineties, when an arty and sickly pessimism ruled among the smart minds in England, he made more than good his contention that life was well worth living. He turned from socialism to another answer to the social and economic ills of the world—but he abhorred capitalism and would have had the world leave the path of modern industrialism and return to an agrarianism—and even medievalism—whose virtues he was inclined to exaggerate and whose drawbacks he brushed aside. It is true, however, that just because world affairs have developed in a certain direction there is no earthly reason why mankind should commit itself to the results, if mankind happens to think them wrong.

Chesterton was a highly courageous and independent spokesman for this point of view. He was a good and brave man. He was not a profound thinker and he was always swayed—a fact in which he exulted—by his human emotions. Mr. Evans seems to understand his temperament fully. Chesterton was very good for the rationalists because against them he kept up a telling guerilla warfare. He was extremely good for all people who took themselves too seriously. His constant effort—and it was no effort but almost a fatal facility—was to see the other side of things. He was the man from the other side of the moon. A fascinating phenomenon in modern letters, there is no one today to take his place. Health, high spirits, a robust childishness, a fiery fancy — these qualities in Gilbert Chesterton will long attract those of us who believe that life is something more than mere material facts. If he did not completely understand the people — as who can — he loved them, wrote for them, and would have headed a revolution for them had it been of the kind he advocated. He saw the deadly fault of systems out of which the spirit passes, and, if such a thing is possible for any mere human being, he followed his great Exemplar in being a religious anarchist.

# Transplanted Talent

*MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS. By William Saroyan. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co.* 1939. 140 *pp.* $2.

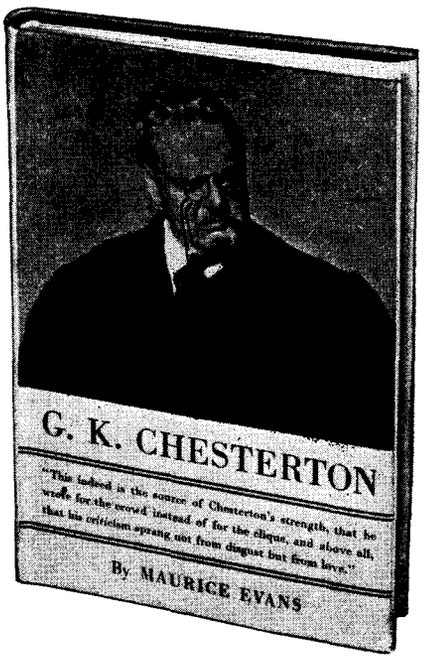
Reviewed by JOHN ANDERSON

IN its printed form Saroyan's "My Heart's in the Highlands" presents a complete chronicle of an event which shook the closing weeks of the 1938-39 season, brought outbursts of approval and derision, and helped deadlock the Critics' Circle in its annual prize giving. Here in addition to the text, are most of the reviews, the original story on which the play was based, together with typically Saroyanesque tidings about the compositions which would excuse the assumption that the author's heart is not in the highlands but on his sleeve.

Yet at the core of all the posturing, hullabaloo, and apparently contagious exhibitionism is a play that, in spite of its exasperating moments, is beautiful, touching, gentle, wise, and slightly screwy. Its story of an unsuccessful poet, his idolatrous young son, and a bewhiskered old actor who could play so magnificently on the bugle that people brought him food, is undeniably cockeyed; it is as cockeyed as any simple, sane, and compassionate fable is likely to appear in a world that is habitually askew.

With his customary modesty Saroyan reports that his play, his first incidentally, is a classic. Maybe it is. If its simplicity were less affected, its discipline stricter, and its own scale of values more sharply defined, it might well be a landmark in the theater. But the impact of its faintly surrealist method, its uncontrolled skylarking, and its occasionally studied affectation suggest the reasons for both its first eminence and, if I may guess, its lurking impermanence.

It is pure theater, virtually a tour de force in pure theater. It plays upon the emotions, visually and orally, as shrewdly as the old nickelodeon pianolas used to pump out "Hearts and Flowers" in sad scenes of the sinless cinemas. This is no small achievement in a theater given over largely to tidy carpentering, and jig-saw stencils. Its power is the power of sheer effectiveness, neurotic and absorbing, but it is power; and when Saroyan gets around to saying more with it than that the world loves beauty, and hungers for it, and lets it die, we can tell more about the new self-appointed classical drama. Here is an impressive beginning of a theater talent that should be preserved from over-inflation — especially by itself.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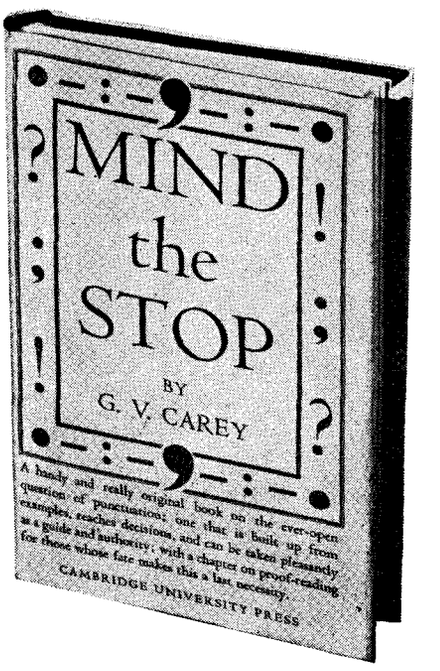


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# Room at the Top

*A LIFE WITH MEN AND BOOKS. By Arthur E. Bostwick. New York: H. W. Wilson Company.* 1939. 358 *pp., with index.* $3.25.

Reviewed by EARLE F. WALBRIDGE

THIS autobiography by the distinguished librarian-emeritus and associate librarian of the St. Louis Public Library will in all probability find its way to the essential, required, and recommended lists of professional reading, along with Dr. Bostwick's "The American Public Library," now in its fourth revised edition. Here he tells, with simplicity and humor, the progressive steps which led from a solitary, old-fashioned Connecticut childhood immediately after the Civil War (rather like Professor Phelps's a decade later) through a doctorate at Yale to a commanding position in the American library profession. Posts on Appletons' "Cyclopedia of American Biography," as assistant editor of the *Forum,* and as science editor of the *Literary Digest*—continued until 1933—preceded his entry into library work in 1895. "For a novice to enter the library profession 'at the top' in this way seems the height of absurdity," remarks Dr. Bostwick—"although it is occasionally done even now." (Washington papers please copy).

Experience came rapidly at the turn of the century when he helped organize the vast system of New York City branch libraries, previously highly individualistic and mutually repellent particles. That story, told at length in H. M. Lydenberg's "History of the New York Public Library," is covered with less detail here, although Dr. Bostwick throws some new light on the military rigor of the staff discipline under Dr. John Shaw Billings, first director of the consolidated New York Public Library, who was more used to dealing with scholars than with the general public. Senior librarians will relish the portraits of John Cotton Dana, the brilliant librarian of Newark, whose lifework was confined to the smaller cities because boards of trustees mistrusted that brilliance, and Melvil Dewey (or Dui), of Columbia, Albany, Lake Placid, the Decimal Classification, and phonetic spelling. Read, for instance, how Dewey circumvented the Columbia faculty and found a loophole through which women students could enter his first library school.

Before leaving in 1909 for nearly thirty years at St. Louis, Dr. Bostwick established open access to shelves, publication of printed bulletins, systematized apprentice instruction, and service to schools, all commonplaces of library service today. He was president of the American Library Association in 1907, running on an independent ticket, and in 1925 was invited to China as library consultant, a roving commission which resulted in one of the most interesting chapters of the book.

"A Life with Men and Books" has an additional claim to distinction. It seems safe to claim that this is the *first* autobiography by a member of the American library profession. Librarians, a long-suffering and much put-upon race, seldom get around to writing their memoirs.

*Earle F. Walbridge, an experienced librarian, is attending the summer session of the Columbia University School of Library Service.*


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# Ex Cathedra

*FOREIGN AFFAIRS. By the Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company.* 1939. 366 *pp.* $3.50.

THAT three British statesmen—Neville Chamberlain, Winston Churchill, and Anthony Eden—should within a year have published their collected speeches in America indicates both the existence of an emergency and the need for explanation in this country. Each of these famous leaders has a distinctive style, revealing not only the thought but also the character of the speaker. Mr. Chamberlain resembles a golfer, wandering amiably along the fairway, concentrating on his own game, and somehow always winning the last putt. Mr. Churchill is a fencer, parrying with zest and skill, and thrusting the foil straight to the heart. Mr. Eden is the gentlemanly cricketer, standing at a wicket for days at a time, and invariably disappointing the American who looks for some excitement.

Mr. Eden's discussion of foreign affairs ranges from his maiden speech in the House of Commons in 1924 to his address before the National Association of Manufacturers in New York last December. As most of the speeches were delivered while Mr. Eden held office, they lack the frankness and freedom which characterizes the critic. Even in the closing series of speeches made after his resignation as Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden is extremely cautious—at times, exasperatingly cautious—in attacking the Prime Minister with whom he had disagreed.

The prevailing tone of Mr. Eden's discourses is the youthful idealism and moral fervor for which he became famous in Geneva and London as champion of collective security. There is frequent reference to the horrors of war which young Captain Eden experienced in France, and to the hopes for a braver new world which his generation thought that they had created. Most of his orations, however, seem notable for style rather than substance. As Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden defends the farcical Non-Intervention Committee as unconvincingly as did Mr. Chamberlain; as ex-Foreign Secretary, he questions the Munich agreement in phrases that exhibit grace rather than force. Perhaps Mr. Eden will regain power, and demonstrate his courage and ability more effectively than in these speeches.

**SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 280)**

R. W. EMERSON
TO THOMAS CARLYLE

I think of you as carrying a trumpet confided to you by some of the Elder Angels to signify by its blasts in Fontarabian echoes that an Empire and a Republic are to fall. Well, your eloquent warning voice will do no harm.

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# Last Expatriate

*MAX AND THE WHITE PHAGOCYTES. By Henry Miller. Paris: The Obelisk Press.* 1939. 75 *francs.*

Reviewed by PAUL ROSENFELD

IT WAS as a depictor of contemporary rottenness that Henry Miller a few years since attained literary notoriety. "Tropic of Cancer," his confessional romance published in Paris and somewhat furtively passed from American hand to hand, represented the chaos by its very form. The narrative was dislocated, the style now mildly dithyrambic, now crassly descriptive. The material frequently was obscene. A decadent, probably half-fabulous Latin Quarter teeming with neuroses, distintegrations, and adventures in mechanical sex furnished the subject: by poetic extension, a "whole world bursting with pus and sorrow" and "just five minutes before the end." Yet unlike other somewhat similar expressions, Céline's for example, the "Tropic" was full of humor, gusto, and exuberance, and irradiated by a curious core of goodness.

One question excited by the book, the question whether its author was an artist, remained in suspense. An ugly use of certain four-letter Anglo-Saxon words—quite in disregard of the spirit of their common usage, which oftentimes is coarse but infrequently ugly—marred the prose. And some of the imagery was artificially violent and even inept. Yet in other spots, it was refreshingly novel and accurate; and some of the langauge was intrinsically comic and magical. Again, the author's ability to depict the black and foggy face worn by the world in hours when the power to act eludes the unhappy human being, bordered on the wonderful. It was plain that, in any case, Miller showed great promise and seemed most likely to repay close scrutiny.

He is a New Yorker, born in 1891. He believes he received no schooling and claims to have been at times a tailor, the personnel-director of a big corporation, a ranchman in California, a newspaperman, a hobo, a "concert-pianist in his spare hours;" and to have gone to Paris "to study vice." The subject seems curiously to have proven itself limitless, since Miller is one, if not the last, of the surviving members of the ancient order of American expatriates. It is from Paris that his books have been published: first "Black Spring," then "Tropic of Cancer," and recently "Max and the White Phagocytes." The possibility of an American edition of them has only recently appeared in the offing. And it is in Paris that Miller is actually working on his long-promised American book, "Tropic of Capricorn."

He seems one of those authors who find themselves relatively late. Take "Max," the melange of his stories, scenarios, and essays. It is full of challenging, quickening stuff: the piece for example about the poor little neurasthenic bore of a Jewish tailor, almost an embodiment of contemporary chaos; the subtle homage to the French nation in the amusing travel-sketch "Via Newhaven-Diepper;" and the penetrating dithyrambic essays on Hamlet, Joyce, and Proust. The sensitivity, the magnanimity, the imagination, and feeling of the great values manifest in them, cannot but make one feel that the author rapidly is becoming one of the writers best integrated with present reality.

# Recurring Patterns in Business

*BUSINESS AND CAPITALISM. By N. S. B. Gras. New York: F. S. Crofts & Co.* 1939. 408 *pp., with index.* $3.50.

Reviewed by JOSEPH CARWELL

THE circumstances that give rise to an economic system often determine its decline as new conditions demand readjustments. Professor Gras is most competent to discuss the recurring patterns in the evolutionary history of economic phenomena. Historical writing, in the very nature of the case, is selective and evaluative, and Professor Gras, a business historian, regards the "business man" as a creative force in society equally with the statesman, scientist, or artist. He therefore makes a significant distinction between economic history with its emphasis on forces and institutions, and business history with its study of capital flow, policy, and management.

The changing meaning of capital and business, from the nomadic tribe to the traveling merchant, is sketched in outline. Capital at one time may have meant an honest sea captain and an able crew to the sedentary merchant. As markets began to extend over state boundaries the small shop owner was forced into the background and a new stage of international trade developed. Professor Gras concludes that the world was indeed the gainer from mercantile capitalism with its joint stock companies, double entry bookkeeping, and its metropolitan economy. It was the stock companies of Sir Thomas Smythe, John Peirce, Matthew Cradock, and Willem Usselinx, which were responsible for the development of the new world. Specialization within mercantile capitalism gave way to industrial capitalism as scientific advancement indicated new channels for the flow of capital. The logic of specialization was ruinous, as each competitor tried to outdo the other in productive efficiency and skill in management, thus leading to combinations and domination by the financial capitalist. New state controls and new state forms emerged to attempt the solution of the conflict between wealth and welfare, as the new functions of capitalism were curbed by public capitalism and government in business.

The forces of capitalism are merely the by-products of the creators of business, whose ability to create capital is far more important than capital itself. This is the criticism that Professor Gras makes of the Nazi treatment of the Jews. Certainly the forces set loose by Fugger, Arkwright, or Morgan, can never be estimated in terms of wealth. Professor Gras is too keenly aware of the emotive forces evoked by certain forms of capitalism against other forms of capitalism, to overlook completely the shifting meaning of capitalism and business in Nazi, Fascist, and democratic states. But the perspective of the historian enables him to accept changes in the stricture of the state and in the function of capitalism and business.

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# The New Books

## Fiction

*DISILLUSION. By Ben H. Cochrane and William Dean Coldiron. Binfords & Mort.* 1939. $2.

There is a fine unwritten novel in the labor struggles of the Pacific Northwest, and one might have thought that Messrs. Cochrane and Coldiron were the boys to write it. When they stick to the subject of plywood they are clearly on familiar ground, and they know a good deal about recent technical developments in class warfare. In "Disillusion," however, they are baffled by routine problems of plot and characterization.

Bill Jackson is a "laboring stiff" who hopes to break into the employer class. When a strike is called in one of the Grays Harbor plywood plants, Bill plays ball with the bosses and finds himself hiring gunmen and supervising strike breakers. It takes some brutal lessons to teach him where his true interests lie, and the final curtain falls on his contrite return to the bosom of the union. This magnanimous scene lends a fairy-tale touch to a story meant to be as tough and ruthless as a length of lead pipe.

M. W.

*UNCLE LAWRENCE. By Oliver Warner. Random House.* 1939. 155 *pp.* $1.50.

This little book comes with a great fanfare from the English reviewers, some of whom see in it resemblance in kind to "Mr. Chips." Like "Mr. Chips" it has sentiment, but unlike "Mr. Chips" it has no charm. The story of a visit paid by a young Englishman to an uncle who has lived since youth in self-imposed exile in Canada, it is a record of trivial happenings, insignificant conversations, and undistinguished personalities. Uncle Lawrence is a spineless sort of man for whose poverty there seems no excuse except the absence of all robustness in his make-up. He has retained tender recollections of home and family, craves affection and communion with those he loves, and is overjoyed by the presence of his nephew. Out of the loneliness of the older man, and the liking of the younger, and with the simplicity of the Canadian background, a pleasing and touching book could have been made. But the author has not had the skill to make it anything but banal and commonplace. It lacks both grace and depth.

A. L.

*ARIZONA. By Clarence Budington Kelland. Harpers.* 1939. 278 *pp.* $2.

Clarence Budington Kelland has gone Western in his latest novel. "Arizona" is an exciting and rapid action yarn of life around Tucson in the early days of that settlement. Quite against the rule for such tales Mr. Kelland makes a woman his central figure. She is a true Kelland heroine who combines comeliness and a strong, resourceful nature with the supreme quality of womanhood, the ability to make superlative pies. Making pies is what makes the story in this case for when Phoebe Titus and her old father reach Arizona on their way to California they are held up there by the sickness of Mr. Titus and are practically without funds. Phoebe makes pies and sells them for a dollar per pie; when enough dollars have accumulated she branches out into freighting and mining on the side and proves herself to be one of the best men of the lot. Mr. Kelland has placed his central story against a background of Indian fighting, scouting, double dealing, and all the other accessories of Western life in the sixties when the Civil War was adding to the general involvements and handsome Government officers were crossing the plains and so furnishing heroes for Western romances. Phoebe marries one of them but it is her career of business conquest rather than love which gives "Arizona" its briskly individual quality.

G. G.

*JUNGLE CAPTIVE. By E. M. Hull. Dodd, Mead.* 1939. 278 *pp.* $2.

As "The Sheik" made a career of avenging his mother on all the Eng-

(*Continued on page* 22)

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## The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

| *Title and Author* | *Crime, Place, Sleuth* | *Summing Up* | *Verdict* |
|---|---|---|---|
| THE SHAKESPEARE MURDERS<br>*Amelia R. Long*<br>(Phoenix Press: $2.) | Faculty of Eastern college decimated by miscreant who turns knowledge of Bard to gory ends. Graduate student solves it. | *Macbeth, J. Caesar, Othello, Romeo and Juliet* all figure in fatalities, with *Timon of Athens* as climax de luxe. | Incarnadine |
| COLD STEAL<br>*Alice Tilton*<br>(Norton: $2.) | Encounter on Boston-bound train with mousy woman keys up Leonidas Wetherall for later murderous happenings whose perpetrator he spots. | Amusing antics of characters and steady stream of chucklesome chatter rather obscure crime—which is solved with neatness and dispatch. | Refreshing |
| DEATH IN THE HOUSE<br>*Anthony Berkeley*<br>(Crime Club: $2.) | Cabinet ministers perish in Parliament trying to finish speech "Brown Hand" doesn't like. One of surviving colleagues stops slaughter. | Expertly constructed, with old murder-agent used in new—and faintly ridiculous—fashion. Baffling no end, also extremely British. | O. K. |
| DEATH SERVES AN ACE<br>*Helen Wills and Robert W. Murphy*<br>(Scribners: $2.) | Another Miss Poker Face crosses sea to Wimbledom where opponent falls dead on court and Scotland Yard takes a hand in unravelling crime. | Love and jealousy on steamer followed by strange happenings in London. Tennis champion maintains silence throughout tale that ends at love. | Unseeded |
| DEATH HAS A PAST<br>*Anita Boutell*<br>(Putnams: $2.) | Sisters and in-laws gather at English country house for ceremonial week. Old, unhappy things rear heads and frayed nerves snap. | Tragedy off-stage; confession reveals how—but not who. Events preceding "acts of violence" compose tale of surpassing suspense. | Absorbing |
| MURDER IN STYLE<br>*Emma Lou Fetta*<br>(Crime Club: $2.) | Blonde with flighty morals and many enemies poisoned at N. Y. fashion show rehearsal. Girl gown-expert does most of sleuthing. | Bunch of sweetly scratchy feline slink beautifully across expensively brocaded background. Problem good and finish both logical and thrilling. | Excellent |

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# Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

### An Error in Finnegan

EVERYONE must have wondered, as did Old Q., as to the problems of proofreading involved in *Finnegans Wake*. To any ordinary proofroom checkup the whole book must have looked pretty much like a continuity of errata. ☞It is our pleasure therefore to nominate Mr. Marshall Best, of the Viking Press, as the world's sharpest reader; probably the only man who has spotted an error in the book. ☞If we were Viking we would certainly issue a voactive advertisement urging the customers who bought Finnegan (quite a number) to make a change on page 34. ☞On that page lines 25 and 26 should be transposed. ☞Mr. Joyce himself, after due reflection, has confirmed that this was a printer's slip and not an idiosyncracy of his own. So get out your copies and make probably the only correction in the history of literature that does not seriously alter the sense of the erring text. ☞The proofreading of Finnegan, we might add, was done in England, and the proofs as there corrected were photographed for the American edition to avoid doing a nightmare job twice.

☞Walter Spofford, librarian of the University Club in Chicago, reminds us that broccoli is referred to by Hazlitt in the famous essay *My First Acquaintance with Poets*. Hazlitt speaks of his father taking "a turn in the garden to gather broccoli-plants." ☞Speaking of *S.R.L.* associations, our colleague Amy Loveman tells us that the magazine is now printed (by the Criterion Company) in the building which was erected by the famous T. L. De Vinne (1828-1914) for his own press, which was the most famous imprint of its day. ☞Charles Scribner's Sons announce the appointment of Nicholas Wreden as manager of the Scribner Bookstore, 597 Fifth Avenue. In this important post Mr. Wreden succeeds a distinguished line of expert bookmen. Mr. Rondot, who had been serving as manager ad interim, is now able to devote all his time to the important French language department, and Mr. David Randall continues in charge of Rare Books. ☞Mr. Wreden, Russian by birth, came to the U. S. in 1920. He spent several years travelling for various publishing houses and then was a manager in the Doubleday Doran chain. He is the author of *The Unmaking of a Russian* (Norton, 1935). ☞The first volume of the Duke University Press Sociological Series will appear shortly, *Lester F. Ward: The American Aristotle* by Samuel Chugerman. Ward (1841-1913) is extolled by many students as the founder of sociology in America though his name is little known to the public. Mr. Chugerman says his biography "has been a labor of love for over 15 years, in the belief that what the people need is not another good five cent cigar but the spread of social science in plain language." ☞Mrs. J. W. Tyler writes from Peru, Nebraska, that the college campus there is famous for its oak trees. There is also a literary society which had long been called The Swastika. That name having become unpopular the club has decided to rebaptize itself Quercus, and asks permission to use as an emblem a little drawing of an oak leaf once done for this department by the gracile hand of Mr. Rey Biemiller. Old Q. assures our friendly correspondent of his pleased assent and best wishes. ☞We do not get many opportunities to look over the volumes that gather on the Juvenile shelf in this office, but we were pleasantly struck by *Little Toot* by Hardie Gramatky—the story of a tugboat (towboat they call them down on the river) and how he overcame his inferiority complex. It is amusingly written and illustrated, and Putnam's are already blowing horns for it. It is planned to have the book christened aboard one of the famous Moran fleet of towboats when the book is launched in September, and Gene Moran has offered to act as godfather. ☞Another unusually attractive juvenile for the quite young is *170 Cats* by Zhenya Gay and Pachita Crespi (Random House). This is an original and unpretentious little tale, very pleasing to those who enjoy pictures of cats (as everyone does) and has a real surprise at the end.

☞The Chatham Book Shop at Chatham, Cape Cod, will have a launching party of its own in honor of Joseph Lincoln's new book which will be on August 14th. Mr. Lincoln collaborated with his son Freeman Lincoln in the writing of this latest novel, *The Ownley Inn,* a mystery story. The plot is said to involve book collectors and a hurricane. ☞Mr. Lincoln will be at the shop that afternoon to authenticate the ceremony.

☞The American Institute of Graphic Arts has appointed a committee to prepare the national celebration, in 1940, of the 500th anniversary of the invention of printing from types. ☞The reckoning is of course only approximate; though the responsibility for the press's triumphs and errors is usually laid upon Gutenberg, there is said to be evidence that printing existed in China as early as the 7th century.

☞1940 will also be the 300th anniversary of the first book printed in the English colonies of North America, Stephen Daye's psalm book. Mexico was over 100 years ahead of us in the matter of printing (1539). The headquarters of the committee will be at 285 Madison Avenue, N. Y. City, with Will Ransom as secretary, and any comments on Printing as curse or blessing may be addressed there.

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## The New Books

(*Continued from page* 20)

lish, so Michael Merston makes a career of punishing all women because his mother was faithless. Tall, handsome, lean, hard, he is worshipped and followed by all men; feared and pursued by all women.

Thus he comes to middle life with his great national resources of sentimentality untapped. A famous hunter, he accepts the job of leading an expedition into gorilla country. When a lion (simba to you, inkoos and inkoosikaas) almost kills Michael, Ray cannot help betraying that she is in love with him, which suddenly explains to the impassive Michael the unaccountable depression which has come over him of late. He too is in love, and with another man's wife. Both he and Ray bear their burdens; honor binds him, duty her. Fortunately, the doctor cousin, a weakling and a cad, in defiance of every code, shoots the villain down.

Though blood flows freely along the course of Miss Hull's story, some of the old unblushing magic has gone out of her writing, or else some of the old susceptibility out of her public.

K. S.

## Travel

*SALWEEN. By Ronald Kaulback. Harcourt, Brace.* 1939. 326 *pp. with index.* $3.75.

Salween, in case you didn't know it, is a river, one of the great rivers of Asia, rising in the great Tibetan buttress of the Himalayas almost within gunshot of two still greater streams, the Mekong and the Yangtze. Ronald Kaulback, who got his first taste of Tibetan exploration in 1933, led his own party north from Burma last year looking for the source of the Salween. His journey was not wildly adventurous, although the going was hard, but there was plenty of incident both pleasant and unpleasant. Among the former were a number of gaily described stops in the monasteries of the Tibetan uplands, and among the latter were, in addition to the usual transport difficulties and the often atrocious weather, frequent encounters with hordes of leeches which dropped from the trees and undergrowth and sucked their way down the explorers' necks, boots, and trousers.

Mr. Kaulback's temperament seems to be just right for this sort of work and his ability to present the story of his activities in an interesting manner makes his book easy and stimulating reading in spite of the geographical difficulties which will confront the lay reader. The simple unpretentious, entirely genuine way in which he tells his tale serves to recreate with sometimes startling vividness the mountains, rivers, villages, and people of one of the earth's strangest and most beautiful lands.

R. H.


## PERSONALS

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**WILL GENTLEMAN, PITTSBURGH**, who answered 254-D, May 20, write again, care Saturday Review. My reply returned, Dead Letter Office. Box 254-D.

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By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

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| | 1-X | 2-W | 3-L | | 4-T | 5-F | 6-Q | 7-E | | 8-T | 9-S | 10-H | 11-O | 12-X | 13-V | 14-K | 15-J |
| | 16-B | 17-G | | 18-B | | 19-Z | 20-G | 21-Y | 22-E | 23-F | 24-P | 25-I | 26-J | | 27-Z | 28-N | 29-Q |
| 30-C | | 31-R | 32-L | 33-K | 34-E | 35-Z | | 36-L | 37-C | 38-G | | 39-T | 40-M | 41-J | 42-O | 43-A | |
| 44-S | 45-F | 46-G | 47-M | 48-A | 49-U | 50-V | | 51-B | 52-E | | 53-Q | 54-P | 55-S | 56-E | 57-F | 58-U | 59-R |
| 60-W | 61-T | | 62-B | 63-Y | 64-U | 65-J | 66-D | | 67-C | 68-A | 69-D | | 70-D | 71-I | 72-O | 73-Z | 74-B |
| 75-Y | 76-P | | 77-V | 78-B | 79-X | 80-W | 81-Q | 82-P | | 83-B | 84-O | | 85-P | 86-C | 87-V | 88-E | 89-M |
| | 90-N | 91-P | 92-R | 93-C | 94-O | 95-Q | 96-X | 97-J | 98-Y | | 99-N | 100-Y | 101-Q | 102-P | 103-X | | 104-C |
| 105-H | 106-I | | 107-N | 108-H | 109-K | 110-P | 111-B | | 112-U | 113-K | 114-I | 115-W | | 116-W | 117-H | 118-L | |
| 119-Z | 120-U | 121-Y | 122-F | | 123-Z | 124-V | 125-Y | 126-N | 127-S | 128-Q | 129-D | 130-E | | 131-B | 132-C | 133-H | |
| 134-W | 135-M | 136-A | | 137-R | 138-Z | 139-G | 140-A | 141-T | 142-E | 143-F | 144-W | | 145-D | 146-O | 147-C | 148-V | 149-E |
| | 150-A | 151-H | 152-B | | 153-O | 154-Y | 155-Z | 156-G | 157-I | 158-J | | 159-H | 160-G | | 161-P | 162-H | 163-W |
| 164-F | 165-X | | 166-E | 167-H | 168-L | 169-A | | 170-V | 171-N | 172-G | 173-X | 174-E | 175-U | 176-Q | | 177-W | 178-D |
| 179-B | | 180-O | 181-G | 182-L | 183-C | | 184-S | 185-P | 186-T | 187-R | 188-U | | | | | | |

### DIRECTIONS

*To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.*

*When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).*

**The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 18 of this issue.**

### DEFINITIONS

A. King of the peris (Persian myth.)

B. Incongruous mixture (comp.)

C. Dry wind from African interior.

D. Blow on the head.

E. Inflexibly obstinate (comp.)

F. Survive.

G. Northeast North American Coast. (Old maps.)

H. One of the Norns (Norse.)

I. Agalloch wood.

J. Headlands.

K. Particle; jot.

L. Muscular.

M. "Rime-cold" giant (Norse.)

N. Position at a distance from shore.

O. Opera by Verdi.

P. Shrewd; of sound judgment (comp.)

Q. Open (the fist.)

R. Athletic contests.

S. Perverse fools.

T. Snatched away (slang.)

U. Defeated.

V. Cul-de-sac.

W. Epic by Firdausi (2 wds.)

X. Rough with hair.

Y. Abstruse.

Z. Equivocated.

### WORDS

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 140 | 150 | 169 | 136 | 68 | 48 | 43 | | | | | |
| 51 | 74 | 111 | 131 | 62 | 83 | 152 | 78 | 16 | 179 | 18 | |
| 37 | 86 | 30 | 183 | 93 | 67 | 104 | 147 | 132 | | | |
| 178 | 129 | 70 | 145 | 69 | 66 | | | | | | |
| 56 | 88 | 174 | 52 | 166 | 130 | 34 | 142 | 22 | 149 | 7 | |
| 5 | 45 | 143 | 23 | 57 | 122 | 164 | | | | | |
| 17 | 160 | 181 | 29 | 46 | 139 | 38 | 172 | 156 | | | |
| 10 | 162 | 167 | 159 | 105 | 108 | 151 | 133 | 117 | | | |
| 71 | 157 | 114 | 106 | 25 | | | | | | | |
| 15 | 41 | 26 | 158 | 65 | 97 | | | | | | |
| 33 | 113 | 109 | 14 | | | | | | | | |
| 36 | 182 | 32 | 168 | 118 | 3 | | | | | | |
| 89 | 47 | 135 | 40 | | | | | | | | |
| 28 | 107 | 99 | 126 | 171 | 90 | | | | | | |
| 180 | 11 | 146 | 153 | 94 | 42 | 84 | 72 | | | | |
| 185 | 54 | 91 | 102 | 85 | 82 | 110 | 161 | 24 | 76 | | |
| 29 | 101 | 81 | 6 | 128 | 95 | 53 | 176 | | | | |
| 187 | 92 | 59 | 31 | 137 | | | | | | | |
| 9 | 184 | 127 | 55 | 44 | | | | | | | |
| 61 | 186 | 4 | 8 | 141 | 39 | | | | | | |
| 64 | 120 | 58 | 175 | 49 | 188 | 112 | | | | | |
| 13 | 148 | 77 | 170 | 50 | 87 | 124 | | | | | |
| 144 | 2 | 177 | 116 | 80 | 60 | 115 | 163 | 134 | | | |
| 165 | 79 | 12 | 103 | 173 | 1 | 96 | | | | | |
| 75 | 98 | 63 | 154 | 121 | 125 | 100 | 21 | | | | |
| 35 | 27 | 138 | 119 | 73 | 19 | 155 | 123 | | | | |

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